

Our last meeting was on March 16/93 and was well attended. If anyone has any suggestions for future guest speakers please bring it up at the next meeting.

Please note that our next meeting will be up to the second Tuesday of April. This will give us a chance to welcome Steve's mother who will be up from B.C.

Next meeting  
Tuesday, April 13  
7:30 p.m.

for more information call Lynne at [REDACTED]

The Gay Pride Parade has been tentatively slated for June 26, 1993. If you can plan to be there it would be a great way to show your support. P-Flag has been asked to host a picnic in conjunction with this event. Plans to make a P-Flag banner have been discussed and anyone willing to head up a group to create a banner can call Cindy at [REDACTED]

Recently Cindy and Joan had the opportunity to join some other members of the Gay community in a dialogue with Education students at the University of Alberta. The students were very positive and showed interest in learning how they should deal with Homosexual issues as they may arise in their classrooms.

At the February meeting we presented a Plaque to Francis and David, the founders of our group. The inscription reads: To Francis and David. For your dedication, vision, encouragement, and love. We thank you.

On March 16, 93 Francis met with Michelle Fallardeau-Ramsey, Deputy Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission. One topic discussed was the need to change certain uses of vocabulary. Here are some of the suggestions made:

1. Tolerance --> Acceptance: Tolerance is a bad word. The implication is that although something is "put up with", it is still despised and objected to. Acceptance is the goal.
2. Spouse --> Partner: The word spouse ( & also marriage) has an historical legal meaning that implies a relationship involving the opposite sex. This needs to be changed. We need to define and use the word partner. Partner should replace spouse in such things as agreements for employee benefits, insurance, pensions ect.
3. Traditional Family --> Functional Family: At present Family is not defined in Canadian law so the courts are in the process of defining it. There is a difference between the Functional Family and the Traditional Family. The term Traditional Family is limiting. In today's society Family comes in many forms and functions well in many forms.

4. Rights: This word has been twisted and misunderstood recently. It would be best to avoid its use. The issue is one of discrimination and abuse of people. It is a question of fairness and equality. One of the judges ruling in the Andrews decision said that "to treat people equally and fairly, you do not have to treat them in an identical way."

We always hate to harp about dues but some long time members still have not paid. Our organization is plugging along on about a \$200 bank account. It costs \$5.52 a year per household just for stamps, that does not include the costs of envelopes, paper ect... If you have special circumstances that prevent you from being able to pay the dues, but still wish to be a member, please drop me a note and something can be arranged.

In the daily Edmonton Journal there is a cartoon called "For Better Or For Worse". A teenage character named Lawrence is Gay and coming out of the closet over the next four weeks. The first frame appeared on March 27th.

Have a happy Easter everyone!

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# Flap over gay in comic strip

## U.S. newspaper publisher rejects homosexual 'propaganda'

Boston Globe

Concord, N.H.

The comic strip *For Better or For Worse*, a saga of the ups and downs of family life, was always a favorite of Nackey Loeb, publisher of *The Union Leader* of Manchester — that is, until "the conflicts and the love" she admired turned to a subject she deplores: homosexuality.

So in a front-page editorial Friday, Loeb announced that the newspaper's readers won't be seeing the strip for at least a week, until the current sequence, about a 17-year-old character named Lawrence announcing his homosexuality, is over.

"There's a crusade going on right now, which is quite obvious — to have the homosexual lifestyle viewed as acceptable and morally justifiable," Loeb said Friday in a telephone interview. "And I am darned if *The Union Leader* is going to be used as a propaganda tool in the process."

Loeb was not alone in her decision, although her pointed views about homosexuality set her apart.

As of Friday, seven newspapers around the U.S. had canceled the strip and 13 others had either stopped running it for now or asked for substitute material, according to Lee Salem, editorial director at Universal Press Syndicate, which distributes the comic.

Most of the papers were in the South and West, Salem said. The comic has 1,400 subscribers and consistently scores high in readership surveys, he said. The *Boston Globe* carries the strip drawn by Canadian Lynn Johnston, and has no plans to stop it.

"I knew going into it this would

Canadian cartoonist Lynn Johnston's strip *For Better or For Worse*, which this week is devoted to a 17-year-old youth's admission that he is gay, met little or no reaction in Canada. No papers cancelled the strip, and few protests were heard. At *The Journal*, Life Editor Wayne Moriarty reported a couple of calls about the strip, wondering where Saturday's continuation was (*The Journal* runs its color comics Saturday; the series continues today on F7). In Ombudsman John Brown's office, there was no noticeable reaction.

In the United States, as the following *Boston Globe* article shows, there was more polarisation.

happen," said Salem, whose company has also weathered uproars over the comic strip *Doonesbury*, which it distributes. "Lynn and I chatted about it, and she was prepared to take the heat."

The sequence on Lawrence continues for four weeks, Salem said, and then his homosexuality will not be referred to again.

The *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* in Little Rock, Arkansas' largest newspaper, canceled the strip outright. The editor said his paper was concerned about the appropriate content for a "family-oriented strip," not about making judgments on homosexual behavior.

"To my personal mind, it represented the continued attempt to politicize all of our life," the executive editor, Griffin Smith Jr., said Friday in a telephone interview. "Comics should be a respite."

"Boy, oh boy," said Johnston, as she read the Loeb editorial, faxed to her home in rural northern Ontario. "It was never my intention to be political. I think it's a tender story."

Loeb claimed in her editorial that Johnston, who has drawn the strip since 1979, "has now decided to join the political propaganda ranks" and is trying to camouflage her "editorial comments" as entertainment. This was lamentable, Loeb wrote, "especially in a section widely read by children."

Johnston, who is married and has two children, said the compassion she believes she has spun through Lawrence's story stems from her own experience 11 years ago with the trauma that came when her brother-in-law revealed to her, and then the family, that he is gay.

In her creative heart, Johnston said, she has known that her character Lawrence was gay for some time, but she held off raising the issue with her readers until he was 17.

"I'm probably never going to have children," Lawrence says in the third panel of Friday's strip.

"Hey, how do you know?" his friend Michael says, taking Lawrence's arm.

"Cause I'm probably never going to get married. Ever," Lawrence says.

In nonstop telephone conversations Friday with reporters which she said had turned her brains to "scrambled eggs," Johnston willingly shared the whole story of Lawrence, but preferred — for readers' sakes — that it not be published. Suffice it to say that Johnston believes "you can't throw someone away."

"It's not as if this is the first time I've handled a subject that is delicate or requires an emotional commitment," she said.

*The Edmonton Journal*